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Executive Registry  
9-2873

11 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. James R. Killian, Jr.

SUBJECT: Congressional Items

1. Estimates. On 17 March Senator Symington called the Director and asked for a memorandum explaining the change in the National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet bomber strength. On 18 March the Director sent a letter to the Senator, containing the following explanation:

"Subsequent to my testimony before your Subcommittee in April 1956, the intelligence community acquired new and better evidence on Soviet heavy bomber production and strength in operational units and we undertook a complete review of our estimates on this subject. Our revised estimate was not completed until after the conclusion of hearings before your Subcommittee and after the adjournment of the Congress. It was based on new evidence and not on any extraneous considerations. This new agreed National Estimate revised downward the estimated total production of BISONE as of July 1, 1956, but did not change the estimated number of modern bombers which the USSR could and, in the opinion of competent experts, probably would provide in its long-range force in the time period beyond the next two years, as submitted to your Subcommittee in April. Obviously, this estimate of future Soviet heavy bomber strength will be subject to constant review in the light of new intelligence."

The letter also explained that the intelligence community is continually reviewing all of its estimates, and that production difficulties, modifications of design, change in emphasis, and other factors mean that actual production anywhere, including the United States and the USSR, does not necessarily coincide with predictions.

On 4 April Senator Symington entered the Director's letter into the Congressional Record, together with his own comment that this was the first case where intelligence had ever overestimated Soviet production

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capabilities. On the same day, the Director sent a letter to the Senator indicating that this was not the first case of overestimation, and pointing out that in balance he did not believe that National Intelligence Estimates in recent years have shown any consistent tendency either to overestimate or to underestimate the significant trends in Soviet capabilities. This second letter has not as yet been introduced into the Congressional Record.

2. Appearances Before Congressional Committees. An important policy issue was raised recently when the Director was invited to appear before the European Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ostensibly for the purpose of briefing them on the situation in Eastern Europe. The Director informed the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mrs. Edna Kelly, that such an appearance would establish a precedent, and that for that reason the matter would have to be referred to the National Security Council. The Director explained his relationship with small select subcommittees of Appropriations and Armed Services Committees, and indicated that he only appeared before other Congressional committees under the most exceptional circumstances. The one exception to the rule was a long standing agreement that the Director of Central Intelligence would keep the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy regularly briefed on nuclear developments within the USSR.

It was pointed out that the Department of State, which has full access to intelligence information, was the logical agency to brief the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees, although the Director would be willing to personally brief appropriate members of Congress on matters in which they had a special interest. This matter was referred to the highest level, where the previous policy was confirmed. Mrs. Kelly and Chairman Gordon of the House Foreign Affairs Committee were so informed, and the Director did not appear.

3. Congressional Jurisdiction Over CIA. The House Government Operations Committee has given to its International Operations Subcommittee, chaired by Porter Hardy, jurisdiction over CIA. The extent to which this assignment will affect future Agency relationships with the Congress is not clear, although it is conceded that the Government Operations Committees have an extremely broad charter and there is nothing to preclude them from taking an interest in CIA matters affecting

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administration or the expenditure of funds. Chairman Hardy of the Sub-committee was invited to lunch by the Director on Tuesday, 26 March, and the attached memorandum of the meeting may be of some interest.

SIGNED

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick

**Attachment**

IG:LC:NSPaul/blc (11 Apr. 57)  
Orig. & 1 - Add.  
1 - IG  
2 - Legis. Counsel ✓